

**Written Testimony from Pamela Mann, Waterbury**

**Before the Connecticut General Assembly Select Committee on Children**

**March 5, 2013**

**In Support of Raised Bill No. 6526 Toxics Disclosure and Innovation for Healthy Children.**

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and Honorable Members of the Committee on Children,

My name is Pamela Mann and I am a Critical Care Registered Nurse at Waterbury Hospital and also reside in Waterbury. I am also the aunt to four, soon to be five, beautiful children. Toxic chemicals in children's products are very worrisome to me, my family, as well as the community as a whole. I would like to express my support for the raised bill 6526 that would require the Department of Public Health to identify chemicals of concern to children and prioritize 2-3 of the most harmful based on toxicity and exposure. This would then require manufacturers to disclose the presence of those 2-3 most harmful chemicals in children's products sold in the state, and would then allow manufacturers over time to shift to safer alternatives.

As a nurse working in the Intensive Care Unit over the last 3 years has opened my eyes to a problem in our society with preventative care. By the time patients are admitted to the hospital in critical condition their disease processes are very progressed. I think it is so important to focus our attention to children's health because what they are exposed to at a young age will affect them the rest of their lives. A developing fetus and young children are the most vulnerable. A developing child's chemical exposures are greater pound for pound, than adults and the developing brain has immature, porous blood-brain barrier allowing for greater chemical exposures.

There is a growing body of evidence that is showing that many chemicals used in children's toys are not safe and are linked to many different diseases. There is a strong public health benefit to identifying chemicals of concern to children and obtaining information on products that expose children to these chemicals. There is more than 30 years of environmental health studies that have led to a growing consensus among the medical and scientific community that exposure to chemicals is contributing to the rising incidence and prevalence of many serious diseases and disorders in our country including leukemia, brain cancer and other childhood cancers which are increased by more than 20% since 1975. Autism has increased more than 10 times in the last 15 years. Asthma incidence has doubled in prevalence between 1980 and 1995 and has stayed at the elevated rate.<sup>1</sup> The list of diseases linked to toxic chemical exposure goes on from there. It has become ever clearer that these toxic chemicals need to be removed from children's products and replaced with safer alternatives.

This can be a great opportunity for Connecticut as a whole. A healthier community will equate to a more productive community. The United States spends about 7,000.00 per person, per year on health care.

This sum doesn't include the extra costs like caring for a child with learning disabilities. It will create opportunity to assist Connecticut manufacturers with green chemistry innovation.

In a recent study released February 2013, Driving Innovation: How stronger laws help bring safer chemicals to market, finds that stricter rules over hazardous chemicals can not only drive innovation, but also create a safer marketplace. In order to increase the likelihood that safer alternatives will be pulled into the market, chemical laws need to clearly identify hazardous properties that are not acceptable in society, generate information about these properties in all chemicals, and require their substitution with safer alternatives in a systematic way. The ability of regulators to restrict or remove chemicals of concern, and promote the development of safer alternatives is a powerful tool to help pull inventions into the market, enabling economies to develop safer alternatives rather than continuing use of chemicals of concern.<sup>2</sup>

In closing I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to the Committee on Children. My hope is that Connecticut will be a leader in protecting our children from toxic chemicals that are linked to rising rates of autism, asthma, cancer, and other devastating diseases.

Sincerely,

Pamela Mann, RN

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<sup>1</sup> Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, "The Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act" Jan. 2010,p3-5

<sup>2</sup>Tuncak, B; "Driving Innovation: How Stronger laws help bring safer chemicals to the market."February 2013, p2-5